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editorials

Turner To The CIA

The perceptiveness of President Carter's nomination of his old Naval Academy classmate, Adm. Stansfield Turner, to be director of the Central Intelligence Agency, remains to be demonstrated. Adm. Turner, commander in chief of allied forces in southern Europe, combines proven naval achievements with an impressive academic background, including a stint as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. But he is little known to the public at large as well as among the senators who will have to decide whether to confirm him; so the hearings on his nomination will be an education for everyone.

What is known of Adm. Turner's views relates to his own specialty, sea power. In writing in the current issue of *Foreign Affairs* that we are "depending heavily on technology and innovation rather than more ships and aircraft to keep the balance from shifting against us," he seems to be voicing the conventional view of the service pleader. The services always want more. But as director of Central Intelligence, Adm. Turner will be required to take a less parochial view. There is nothing publicly known of his background that indicates he would be incapable of doing so.

The real assignment at the CIA, however, is to bring the agency under control; to prevent a repetition of the outrageous record of abuse of power and of calculated illegality that has put a cloud over its operations and brought American foreign policy into disrepute in so many quarters of the world, and to restore it as a subservient arm of democratic government. These are the issues on which we hope the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence will concentrate when Adm. Turner appears for his confirmation hearing. After that, the senators and the nation as well will have a better idea who he is, what he stands for and whether he looks as if he can impose order on an agency that has acted for so long as if it were above the rule of law.